



January Recent Acquisitions



A SPLENDID COPY IN NEAR FINE
CONDITION OF GOULD'S LAST
MAJOR WORK



CASUARIUS BICARUNCULATUS, Sclater.

GOULD, JOHN and RICHARD BOWDLER SHARPE

The Birds of New Guinea and the adjacent Papuan Islands, including many new species recently discovered in Australia.

FIRST EDITION, A SPLENDID COPY IN NEAR FINE CONDITION of Gould's last major work, the companion to his monumental *Birds of Australia*.

London: Taylor and Francis for Henry Sotheran & Co., 1875-1888.

Five volumes, large folio (550 x 370mm). Full Contemporary Green Morocco Gilt, Elaborate Greek Key Borders on all Covers, Spines with Gilt Designs in Compartments, with 320 fine hand-coloured lithographic plates by Gould and Hart, printed by Walter or the Mintern Brothers.

Gould died on 3 February 1881 shortly after the publication of the 12th part. The remaining 13 parts were edited or written by Richard Bowdler Sharpe and illustrated by William Matthew Hart. A page of letter press accompanies each plate, describing the species figured, giving a short sketch of its history. There are many birds of gorgeous plumage inhabiting New Guinea and neighbouring Islands. This is certainly the finest work to illustrate them. Many impressive sections with bold depictions often include the birds' natural habitats and food sources such as specific reptiles and insects.

Represented bird families include birds-of-paradise, eagles, honey-eaters, sunbirds, thickheads, flowerpeckers, starlings, pittas, kingfishers, cuckoos, parrots, lorikeets, cockatoos, fruit-pigeons, and, in finale, cassowaries.

John Gould was without question the most prolific ornithological artist of the 19th Century, and the only one to rival John James Audubon in ambition and quality. The 19th Century was a time of intense fascination with discoveries in natural history, especially regarding knowledge of the wildlife of exotic lands. Gould shared the romantic enthusiasm of his time for such subjects, as well as the popular impulse to catalogue. He learned taxidermy in his early teens at Windsor Castle, later becoming a taxidermist for the Zoological Society of London. In 1830, Gould received some exotic bird skins from the Himalayas, and shortly thereafter in 1831, he published his first work "A Century of Birds from the



Himalaya Mountains". This work, along with the first edition of "Ramphastidae" and "Birds of Europe" were enormously successful and allowed him enough capital to travel abroad. He went to Australia and New Guinea where he observed and sketched the native birds and mammals. From his sketches, artists, such as his wife Elizabeth Gould and Edwards Lear, transferred them to stone, hand printed and hand coloured them with their masterful artistry.

Gould combined his passion for natural history with outstanding scientific, artistic and entrepreneurial talents to embark on a series of projects that would eventually make him the leading publisher of ornithological illustrations in Victorian Britain. He created over three thousand plates of birds in over forty volumes. Gould himself described the colouring of the plates as follows: "Many of the public are quite unaware how the colouring of these large plates is accomplished; and not a few believe that they are produced by some mechanical process or by chromolithography. This, however, is not the case; every sky with its varied tints and every feather of each bird were coloured by hand; and when it is considered that nearly two hundred and eighty thousand illustrations in the present work have been so treated, it will most likely cause some astonishment to those who give the subject a thought".

His career spanned five decades and he produced a monumental series of rare publications of birds throughout the world, including "The Birds of Great Britain", "The Birds of Europe", "The Birds of Australia", "The Birds of Asia", "The Birds of New Guinea", "A Monograph of the Ramphastidae" (Family of Toucans), "A Monograph of the Trogonidae" (Family of Trogons), and "A Monograph of the Trochilidae" (Family of Hummingbirds).

Provenance: Lord Braybrooke. Although there is no Subscriber's list Lord Braybrooke is likely to be a Subscriber.

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